

REMARKS

Responsive to the Office Action dated December 6, 2001, Applicants have replaced claims 1-10 with new claims 11-20. Claims 11-20 correspond to original claims 1-10, and do not comprise any amendments which are required for patentability purposes.

In view of the above amendments and following remarks, reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested.

In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner objected to the drawings. In response to this objection, Applicants submit herewith a drawing change approval request providing Fig. 1 with a legend "prior art". Applicants believe that this fully addresses the Examiner's concerns in this objection.

In addition, the specification has been amended to provide headings more in accordance with U.S. practice.

The Examiner has objected to the spacing of the lines in the specification and in the claims. Accordingly, a substitute specification is submitted herewith. Applicants have provided a duplicate copy of the substitute specification with markings indicating where changes have been made to the specification.

The Examiner also objected to the line spacing of the claims. To address this rejection, Applicants have replaced the claims with new claims 11-20.

Claims 1-2 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) as being unpatentable over Mitcham et al. in view of Hatch. The Examiner also rejects claims 3, 4-7, and 8-10, although the Examiner does not specifically list these claims under the main rejection heading under paragraph no. 6 of the Official action.

Applicants traverse this rejection for at least the following reasons.

Independent claim 11 recites a clearance air gap provided to electrically insulate the laminations from the bolt passing therethrough.

Neither of the references applied, i.e., Mitcham et al. and Hatch, teaches or discloses the recited clearance air gap for electrical insulation purposes. In the outstanding Office Action, the Examiner refers to a spacer 34 which provides a spacing between a bolt 45 and other members.

Hatch discloses an electrical machine in which a stack of stator discs 19 and 20 and a stack of rotor discs 21 and 22 intercept a magnetic field generated by field coils 14 and 15. Each of stacks 19 and 20 of stator discs 26 is secured to magnetic shielding sections 29 and 30 by bolts 45 (see Fig. 3). The bolts 45 pass through insulated sleeves 34 located in a nonmagnetic extension 35 of the stator shielding member 29 (see column 3, line 67 through column 4, line 4). The purpose of the insulated sleeves is to reduce the leakage of magnetic flux.

The Examiner asserts that it would have been obvious to use the insulating sleeve 34 as disclosed by Hatch on a rotor disc as disclosed in Mitcham et al. Applicants note that page 1, lines 25-31 of the present application explain that physical insulation sleeves or sheaths may be used. However, such physical insulations can be expensive and can be damaged during assembly.

The present invention addresses such problems associated with physical insulation sleeves or sheaths.

Accordingly, independent claim 11 is now amended to clarify that the clearance gap is absent a material, to further distinguish the claim from the applied references.

The apparatus of Hatch provides a clearance between bolt 45 and stacks 19 and 20 of stator discs 26 (see Fig. 3). However, no explanation is provided as to the structure of the

gap or its purpose. There is no disclosure in the Hatch patent which indicates that the laminations are electrically insulated from the bolts passing therethrough. Accordingly, Applicants submit that neither Mitcham nor Hatch discloses or suggest the use of a clearance air gap to electrically insulate laminations from a bolt passing through those laminations, in the manner as recited in independent claim 11 of the present application.

Each of claims 12-20 depends, either directly or indirectly, from independent claim 11. Accordingly, each of those claims is patentable at least for those same reasons noted herein with respect to independent claim 11.

Should the Examiner have any questions or concerns regarding this amendment, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

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